

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4, 6-12, and 14-17 are pending in this case. Claims 1, 6, 7, 11, 12, and 17 are amended and Claims 5, 10, and 13 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer by the present amendment. As amended Claims 1, 6, 7, 11, 12, and 17 are supported by the original claims, no new matter is added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-4, 7-9, and 12-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Ando et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,379,990, hereinafter "Ando"). However, Claims 5, 6, 10, 11, 16, and 17 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but otherwise were indicated as including allowable subject matter if re-written in independent form.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication that Claims 5, 6, 10, 11, 16, and 17 include allowable subject matter.

Claim 1 is amended to include the subject matter of Claim 5, Claim 7 is amended to include the subject matter of Claim 10, and Claim 12 is amended to include the subject matter of Claim 13. Accordingly, independent Claims 1, 7, and 12, (and Claims 2-4, 8, 9, 11, and 14-17 dependent therefrom) are allowable.

Application No. 10/767,333
Reply to Office Action of October 31, 2006

Accordingly, the pending claims are believed to be in condition for formal allowance.

An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

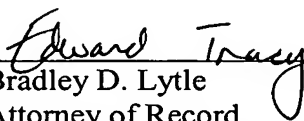
Respectfully submitted,

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